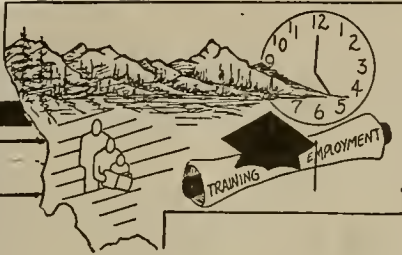
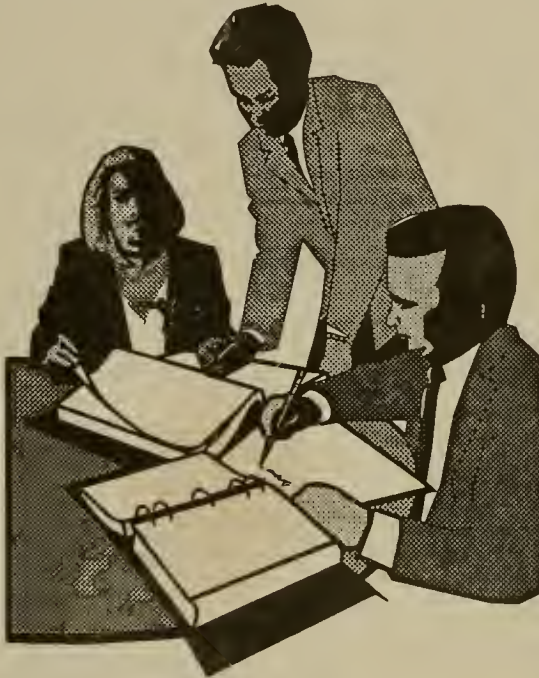


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VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2

MAY 1995



It's Here !

by Kim Brown

April 15, 1995, Governor Racicot signed into law the Montana Welfare Reform Act. Only days later, final federal approval followed from the Department of Health and Human Services. With these two actions, Montana's welfare reform project, "Families Achieving Independence in Montana" (FAIM) became a reality.

For over a year, SRS staff have been working diligently to receive the "green light" for FAIM. Now those efforts turn to ensuring welfare reform is implemented on time and is given every possible chance of succeeding for all Montanans.

Participants stand to benefit because FAIM actively promotes recipient self-sufficiency through such provisions as: policy unification and simplification, increased resource limits, one-vehicle exclusion, the JSP diversionary program, enhanced Child Support Enforcement activities, one-time employment-related payments, and coordinated employment and training opportunities.

Communities stand to benefit because recipients should come onto the welfare rolls less frequently (if at all) and should stay on assistance for shorter periods of time. While receiving a grant, participants will be continually working to find alternatives to public assistance, strengthen their families, and become self-sufficient. If financial help is needed for longer than the AFDC Pathways Program allows, recipients will contribute back to the community through community service work.

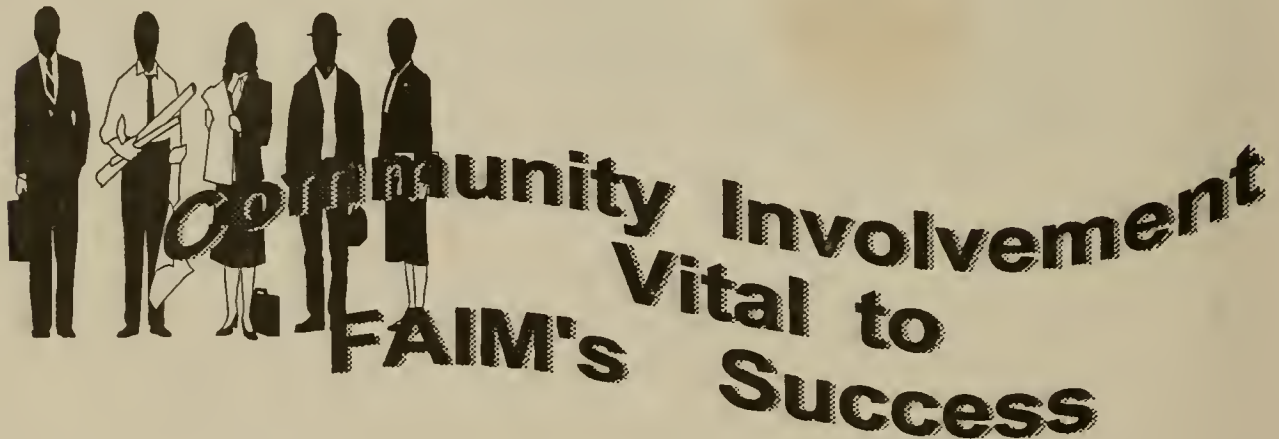
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The State stands to benefit because it will be providing its low income families the temporary assistance they need to help them become self-supporting, tax-paying, contributing members of society.

Implementation in the first counties is scheduled for February 1996. This means that in the next nine months, an enormous amount of work must be accomplished. New policy manuals must be written, assistance forms and applications must be revised, Administrative Rules must be written and hearings held, the TEAMS system must have numerous design changes made to accommodate FAIM, eligibility staff must be trained, recipients must be informed of the coming changes which will dramatically and directly affect many of them, and communities must develop their community operating plans outlining how local resources will be coordinated, developed and enhanced, what types of community service work will allowed in the Community Services Program, and how increased child care needs will be met.

It is imperative work on these tasks begin as soon as possible, if it has not already. It is also imperative progress be steady to ensure Montana will be ready for FAIM. Though welfare reform may not have seemed a priority, or a reality, even a few weeks ago, it is now both. Let's embrace this exciting opportunity for our state by rolling up our sleeves and striving together to see that the project is a success.



by Sherri Brandewie

FAIM implementation dates are fast approaching. Much work, which will ensure the achievement of the project's goals, is yet to be done. While FAIM is managed by the Department of Social & Rehabilitation Services, its success is equally dependent on the participation of every community throughout Montana.

"Families Achieving Independence in Montana" is structured toward families availing themselves of employment and training opportunities and ultimately reaching

self-sufficiency. A major objective in the achievement of self-sufficiency involves creating alternatives to public assistance for participants by developing community partnerships and capitalizing on existing resources.

These partnerships between welfare offices and community resource providers must stress networking and development to ensure participant success. In addition, communities will benefit because when these alternatives/resources exist, the amount of money spent on public assistance benefits, as well as the time participants spend on assistance, will decrease. Some families may even be able to avoid coming on to the system entirely if enough alternatives/resources are available.

County Directors throughout the state will be establishing Community Advisory Councils. The first task for these Councils will be to conduct community needs assessments. These assessments will assist in identifying the need for coordination and expansion of existing community resources, as well as the development of additional resources.

The Council will be charged with developing a community plan to identify and address local needs, e.g.: availability of adequate employment, training and educational opportunities/activities; availability of adequate supportive services or alternatives for child care and transportation; increased availability of work experience programs and sites, etc.

Additionally, the community plan will outline various local decisions—e.g.: post secondary education criteria; allowable community service activities; supervision of work sites; reporting requirements for attendance and performance, etc.

A Statewide Advisory Council, which will include Community Advisory Council representatives, will be established to ensure some consistency between communities and to act as a clearinghouse for ideas.

If you are interested in the coordination and development of the FAIM project in your community and wish to participate on a Community Advisory Council, contact your local County Director or any member of the FAIM team at (406) 444-4545.

FAIM Coordinator PD Update

by Jon Meredith

Development of the FAIM Coordinator position description has generated a great deal of interest and input from all quarters in the Division. Some people seem to see the

position as being what it is today with some "very minor" changes (additions). Others see the success of welfare reform as requiring the role of the FAIM Coordinator to be substantially different from that of the ES positions of today. Current discussions seem to favor the position duties falling somewhere between those two notions.

The profile models or screening tools being finalized by the Self-Sufficiency Team actually drive or dictate the responsibilities of the position as far as FAIM involvement is concerned. Consequently, if a simple checklist were used to determine client referral to JOBS, that part of the job of the FAIM Coordinator would be to plainly administer an instrument, negotiate an uncomplicated agreement, make a referral and perform some elementary monitoring activities.

However, if the FAIM Coordinator were also required to administer a second screening device and determine to which resources the almost-job-ready or the maybe-never-job-ready client should be referred, the duties involved would become a little more complicated. Some element of judgment beyond rote or cookbook application of predetermined rules would then become necessary. The FAIM Coordinator would have to administer at least two instruments, use good judgment about the advisability of available resources, drive a hard bargain in reaching an agreement, make a referral and perform some monitoring activities.

Much input has already been received on the initial draft of the document. Generally, commentators seem to think eligibility determination will remain the major part of the coordinator responsibilities. Although eligibility determination will continue to be a part of Coordinator duties, it does not appear it will be a major part of those duties. The Coordinators will more likely be spending the bulk of their time administering evaluation/screening tools, interviewing, as well as negotiating and monitoring action plans and Family Investment Agreements.

The current plan is to continue receiving commentary on the final draft of the PD through May 19th and have the document submitted to SRS Personnel for review by the end of the month.

Good-bye, ED

by Sue Skinner



Since the inception of field staff representation on Central Office teams, Ed Scheibl has been a member of FAIM Team. Ed represented Region IV, but recently resigned his position from the Team due to time constraints.

He will be missed by all of us on the FAIM Team. We appreciated his consistent approach to solving problems and always staying focussed on the project at hand. THANKS, Ed!

Workers' Comp and FAIM

by Jon Meredith

Concerns about worksite availability in both the Pathways' and Community Services portions of the FAIM Project prompted an unsuccessful attempt to introduce client exemption amendatory language midway through the recent legislative session. Despite every effort (with State Fund and DOL staff) to make certain neither the concept nor the language would offend anyone, the proposed amendment met with surprisingly stiff opposition from the insurance industry. After some brief but intense reconsideration, the request was dropped.

However, the amendatory idea and the concern did not die. When SB209 (the welfare reform bill) was transferred to the House, Representative John Cobb approached the Family Assistance Division with a proposal and a draft of language he had requested from the Legislative Council. We revised the language somewhat and returned it to him. Representative Cobb introduced the amendment and succeeded in adding it to the bill on the House side. The Senate accepted the amendment and it has now become an effective part of the law with Governor Racicot's signature on April 15th.

The amendment is subpart (8) of Section 3. "FAIM project -- components." of the bill. It reads:

(8) The department shall furnish workers' compensation coverage, as provided in 39-71-118, for recipients in any component of the FAIM project who perform community service work or who participate in a work experience program.

Although this arrangement will not provide airtight coverage for providers of worksites, it will go a long way in that direction. If the provider wishes to gain "exclusive remedy protection," he/she will still have the option of purchasing insurance. The cost of the insurance should be quite inexpensive (probably in the \$5 - \$20/month range) because the classification codes for the employment will likely be at the low-cost end. When considering the labor being provided, such amounts should not be an impediment to employing clients.

Thanks primarily then to Representative Cobb's efforts, we have cleared one more FAIM implementation hurdle. John Cobb has been a real advocate for the welfare reform package and we hope he will continue to be involved, especially as we begin to see necessary '97 legislative changes emerge with FAIM activation.



Managed Care Planned FAIM Participants for

by Kathleen Martin

As the FAIM start-up date rapidly approaches, it's time to begin thinking about how Medicaid benefits change for FAIM participants. The most important phrase to remember is **MANAGED CARE**. Every FAIM recipient will be required to participate in a Medicaid managed care program, if one is available in their county.

There are two types of managed care planned for the FAIM program. If an HMO in your county has a contract with Medicaid and has openings for more Medicaid patients, then the FAIM adult will be required to participate in the HMO as their managed care program. If there is no HMO for Medicaid in your county, or if the HMO has no more openings, then the FAIM adult will be required to choose a Passport provider. (Most of the existing AFDC population is already in the Passport program). If neither of these options exist in your county, then the FAIM adult will not be able to participate in managed care, but will still receive a limited Medicaid benefit package.

HMOs offer recipients the benefits of a medical home, with a primary care provider and a network of specialists and other services. All of this, with no co-payments! Perhaps the most exciting feature of HMOs is their ability to offer services that Medicaid cannot currently pay for, such as: smoking clinics, weight loss clinics, or diabetes education. HMOs can provide a very positive opportunity for Medicaid recipients.

Medicaid program staff are currently working with the three existing Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) in Montana. The goal is to make HMO services available in pilot counties by late this summer. The three existing HMOs are: Yellowstone Community Health Plan (in Yellowstone County); Glacier Community Health Plan (in four counties in northwestern Montana); and HMO Montana (Blue Cross and Blue Shield), which operates in about 40 counties across the state. We hope to eventually contract with all three of these organizations. The HMOs will contract with the state on a county by county basis, and as the program expands into your county, you will be notified. Medicaid staff and their contractors will provide training and support as the program is implemented.

Questions about the HMO program can be directed to Sharon Donovan in the Medicaid Division. — *Kathleen Martin is Medicaid Managed Care Section Supervisor.*



The FAIM Path

by Penny Robbe

(AND ARE THOSE BLOCK GRANTS STUMBLING BLOCKS, OR BUILDING BLOCKS???)

As you know, Montana's FAIM demonstration project has been approved by the federal officials and by the legislature. What seems to be on everyone's mind now is what impact national welfare reform will have on FAIM. The following is an update of the most current welfare reform bill:

The House of Representatives passed the Personal Responsibility Act, HR 4, on March 24, 1995. That Act has seven titles which each establish block grants or reforms for particular human services programs and one title for miscellaneous provisions.

The seven titles are:

- 1) **Title 1—Temporary Assistance for Needy Families** (includes AFDC, JOBS and Emergency Assistance funding and replaces those programs with this block grant program).
- 2) **Title 2—Child Protection** (includes IV-E and numerous other CPS funding and replaces those programs with this block grant program).
- 3) **Title 3—Child Care and Nutrition** (includes Child Care Block Grant, At-Risk, Transitional, AFDC Child Care funding and WIC, Summer Food, School Lunch and Breakfast and some other nutrition funding and replaces them with Child Care, Family Nutrition and School-based Nutrition block grant programs).
- 4) **Title 4—Restricting Welfare and Public Benefits for Aliens** (removes illegal aliens and legal non-immigrants from eligibility for federal means-tested programs, except for "non-cash, in-kind emergency assistance").
- 5) **Title 5—Food Stamp Reform and Commodity Distribution** (allows cash out to certain households, and allows food stamp eligibility rules to conform to rules used to establish eligibility under the cash grant (Temporary Assistance) program. Imposes major work requirements on Food Stamp able-bodied recipients between 18-50 years-old).
- 6) **Title 6—Supplemental Security Income** (denies SSI benefits to those with primary diagnosis of drug or alcohol dependency, repeals comparable severity test for determining SSI eligibility for children).
- 7) **Title 7—Child Support** (establishes a federal registry of child support orders by 1998, requires SSNs on professional and occupational licenses, marriage licenses and divorce decrees, etc., requires states to establish an automated directory of new hires by employers within 15 days of hire or first pay, and many other provisions).
- 8) **Title 8—Miscellaneous** (exempts states from Regulation E liability if program benefits delivered through EBT are lost or stolen). Requires states that use EBT cards to include a photograph of members of the household to which the food stamp card is issued).

That is a very brief run-down of HR 4. What is important to remember is that it is likely to undergo significant change in the Senate. Further, President Clinton has stated that he does not support HR 4 in its current format. The latest information I have is that a number of states' Governors favor some type of block granting. Governor Racicot and our Director, Peter Blouke, have stated their support for the concept of block granting, which could lead to more state flexibility in administering social service programs, with fewer reporting requirements.

Titles 1, 3 and 5 would likely have the largest impact on FAIM. Should HR 4 in its current form pass the Senate and get signed by the President (**again, highly unlikely**) the most obvious impact would be loss of additional federal funds needed to run FAIM in the first few years of the demonstration. Some changes in work program design, child care benefits and some "stricter" eligibility would likely result. In a nutshell, welfare reform is on the horizon for Montana. FAIM will be implemented whether block grants occur or not--it will likely be up to us whether they are "stumbling" block grants or "building" block grants!

New Region IV FAIM Team Member

by Sue Skinner

Mary Kay McGinnis began working for the Department of SRS 21, yes, 21 years ago. Starting in the clerical unit, she is now an Eligibility Examiner Supervisor and an assistant to the County Director in Silver Bow County. Continuous changes have always been a part of these years of service.

Mary Kay volunteered to become a member of the FAIM Team when her region needed representation due to the resignation of Ed Scheibl. Because Silver Bow County will be one of the first counties to implement welfare reform and will also be an evaluation county, Mary Kay wanted to become as knowledgeable as possible about FAIM and all the changes it will entail. The nearer the deadline, the more apprehensive staff will become. By being a member of the FAIM Team, she hopes to alleviate this feeling by providing positive feedback and information to the workers.

In addition to FAIM Team, Mary Kay is a member of the JOBS Task Force, Region IV Management and Policy Teams, and is a member of the Management Evaluation Group.

Mary Kay is married and has one teenage son. Baseball has taken up most of their summer time. This summer will be their first time to "play" in 14 years. The family hopes to do some 4-wheeling.

FAIM Team welcomes Mary Kay. We are looking forward to the implementation of FAIM with her partnership.

FAD Teams Report on FAIM Activities

In past newsletters, FAIM Team has updated you on our different projects, activities, goals, etc. Since welfare reform is a project of the entire Family Assistance Division, we'd like to start featuring updates from the other Central Office teams in each newsletter so our readers can share in our collective progress as we get closer and closer to implementation.

POLICY TEAM

by Cynthia Whitbeck: Policy Team has been actively involved in preparation for FAIM implementation. Our team has committed 2.5 FTE to FAIM. Activities have included participation in General System Design meetings with FAIM Team, BDM staff, and field staff; review of the Terms and Conditions with appropriate staff from all teams; drafting FAIM manual material for AFDC, Food Stamp Program and AF/MA; changing our contract focus from FS Outreach to Food and Nutrition education; and providing "readiness preparation" for counties.

Policy Team members have already started "readiness preparation" for the first FAIM conversion counties. The goal is to prepare counties for FAIM conversion and to build a network of trained staff or Super Users to assist in the process as new counties come on. Preparation will accomplish the following:

- Identify unnecessary or duplicative eligibility determination processes to free up more time for workers;
- Identify training issues for the training coordinator;
- Develop a network of SUPER USERS to help each county prepare for FAIM implementation;

The team, consisting of the AFDC and AF/MA specialists and back up specialist with assistance of at least one supervisor or lead worker in each county will review approximately 5% AFDC cases;

Case reviews will identify problems in current policy and recommend corrective action;

FAIM policy changes will be identified and discussed with staff;

A "Get Ready for FAIM" fact sheet will be compiled with results for use by remaining counties to assist their preparation for implementation; and

County staff will be resourced as Super Users to counties coming on FAIM as conversion counties become familiar with welfare reform.

The Super User review team schedule is:

COUNTY	# AFDC CASES	REVIEW DATE
Silver Bow	30	May 4 and 5
Beaverhead	5	April 27
Jefferson	5	April 26
Park	7	May 30 or 31
Meagher	5	May 30 or 31
Broadwater	5	May 23
Valley	6	week of June 5
Phillips	5	week of June 5

POLICY TEAM DIVERSIONS TO FAIM FOCUS

Policy team members are also committed to the new Plastic Card Technology Users group currently formulating and designing a statewide electronic benefits infrastructure which will pilot Medicaid Passport Program as soon as October 1, 1995 in Lewis and Clark County. The pilot will utilize smart card technology in place of paper medical authorization for approximately 500 households receiving medical services from four Passport providers.

Electronic Medicaid Passport benefit pilot is expected to run 18 months. Full Medicaid services and additional programs such as AFDC and Food Stamp Program are expected to convert as soon as possible after that time. This project is temporarily distracting approximately .5 Policy team FTE from FAIM preparation at the moment. However, the new electronic method of providing benefits for most programs is expected to assist welfare demonstration long range in areas of delivery, accuracy, convenience, cost effectiveness and fraud control.

SUPPORT TEAM

by **Michelle Oelfke**: Support Team has been working in a number of ways with the FAIM Team. The Team is comprised of Renie Hanson, Cory Hartman, Bill Anderson and Michelle Oelfke.

Renie and Cory are the Administrative Support staff for the entire Family Assistance Division. They estimate approximately 40% of their time is spent working on FAIM projects. Renie is the FAIM Newsletter Coordinator. The newsletter is produced quarterly to address issues focusing on the direction Montana's FAIM Project will be taking toward achieving independent living for all families throughout the state. Cory has been scheduling meeting places and arranging travel for the members of FAIM team.

Bill Anderson, a Management Analyst, just recently finished work on the Proficiency Test Task Force. His next task is to develop a Case Transfer Policy which will ensure all cases are transferred correctly during the phase in stage of FAIM. He is also working on the development of new forms to be used for Corrective Action and Management Evaluations as they will also change with the implementation of FAIM.

Michelle Oelfke, Training Coordinator, meets bi-weekly with Kim Brown and Sue Skinner of the FAIM Team. Together they are mapping out the training plan to ensure all staff are prepared for the transition. Training is a key issue to the success of implementation of FAIM. Four primary training areas have been identified: Attitudinal/Motivational; Interviewing and Areas of Assessment/Barrier Identification; Policy/Procedure; and Systems. Currently, there are three workshops being offered by the University of Montana to help prepare staff for change. They are: 1) Non-Verbal Communication; 2) Enhancing Your Interviewing Skills/Interviewing for Potential; and 3) Empowering Clients and Staff. Through the Capacity Building Grant, which was written by the Department of Labor and Industry, a number of sessions will be held via MetNet and Uplink. Some of the topics include: Conflict Resolution, Holistic Assessment, and Initial Interviewing and Barrier Identification.

Support Team is excited to be working in conjunction with the rest of the Division on FAIM. Our commitment is to support FAIM Team's effort to ensure the success of FAIM through efficient, effective and timely implementation while maintaining cost neutrality.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY TEAM

by Patti Russ: Members of our team have been working closely with FAIM Team to prepare for welfare reform implementation. A profiling system is currently being developed to assist the new FAIM Coordinator determine which participants are referred to JOBS and which participants they will work with directly. The goal is to create a screening and referral tool that will take a very short period of time to complete, and should also give the FAIM Coordinator an accurate idea of the type of service required by the participant, be it service brokering, intensive case management or advocacy. The prototype "Screening Document" is currently being tested in Beaverhead, Cascade, Carbon, Custer, Sweetgrass, Gallatin and Flathead Counties.

CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES TO BENEFIT FUTURE FAIM COORDINATORS

Last year, the federal government awarded the State of Montana a grant to encourage interagency cooperation and to "build our capacity" in delivering training and technical assistance through available technology. Patti Russ, Sue Skinner, and Michelle Oelfke have had the privilege of collaborating with the Department of Labor and others on this project as members of the Cooperative Planning Corp. The result is a great way for front line eligibility staff to get training in the area of "case (or participant) management" without having to travel too far.

In 1995, four technology trials are being offered, each featuring topics related to case management concepts or skills. Phase One will involve two different kinds of statewide broadcasts, and Phase Two will rely on two different uses of computers. All activities try to link people and programs whether on the other side of town, in the next county, or across the state. Every effort is being made to reduce travel, but subsidies will be available for some trainees' mileage, meals and lodging.

Because of the collaborative effort on the Capacity Building project, on June 6, SRS will bring nationally acclaimed Welfare to Work expert, Joseph Rulo, to Bozeman to conduct a Welfare to Work workshop exclusively for eligibility staff. There will be seating for 40 individuals. This training is guaranteed to be a great introductory experience for the new FAIM coordinators.

On June 7, Mr. Rulo goes on-air statewide to discuss *"Interviewing and Areas of Assessment Including Identification of Barriers."* Those individuals who participated on the 6th are invited to spend a second day with Joe as he broadens his focus and talks to "case managers" around the state. (If you are unable to attend on the 6th, join us via satellite uplink on the 7th).



FAIM Participants Partners in Welfare Reform

by Roger La Voie

Now that we all know welfare reform in Montana is a certainty, it is time to prepare our system as well as ourselves for the metamorphosis. And the implementation of the components of FAIM may be even sooner than you realize. Since benefits will be issued in eight counties under our FAIM policy in February of 1996, the staff in these eight counties will actually be determining eligibility based on this policy in January, 1996. They have less than eight months to become proficient with the policies, programs, and cultural changes inherent to FAIM.

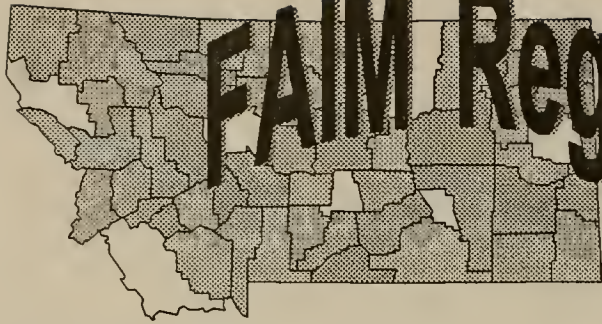
In regard to the cultural change of FAIM, I would like to suggest a different way for us to refer to our clients. A "client" (or "customer") is someone who uses our services. This terminology has worked in the past: our clients have sought our services in order to assist them in meeting their basic needs.

But, under FAIM, we have a very special interest that the people who use our services are also participating in our programs to become self-sufficient. This program participation is perhaps the key feature of FAIM as well as an opportunity for the participants to realize their potentials and develop their skills and abilities to care for themselves and their families.

I would, therefore, propose that we view the individuals contacting our system for assistance as program "participants" rather than "clients."

The term "participant" also conveys the image of a partnership between the participant and the FAIM Coordinator. This demonstrates our respect for those who would use our services to improve themselves by becoming self-sufficient. It also suggests they are in control of their lives by actively and voluntarily participating in the FAIM program, rather than just receiving financial benefits.

I share your excitement as we prepare to implement FAIM. And I hope that you will look for new and better ways of relating to our participants as we redefine the culture of operations and set the context for the specific policy and program changes.



FAIM Regional Updates

Region I

by Anastasia Burton: FAIM Team members Sue Matthews, Kim Brown, and Jon Meredith attended the Region I Corrective Action meeting held in Sidney on April 27. Along with Nicki Wretland of CSED, they demonstrated how interactive interviewing may work under FAIM. Kim played the role of FAIM Coordinator, Nicki was the representative from Child Support, and Sue and Jon were clients.

A "FAIM Pre-Test" was given to the approximately 40 people in attendance. They included County Directors, Eligibility Specialists, and JOBS Operators. We're happy to report the majority of people were "up to speed" on FAIM!

Region II

by Donna Pike: FAIM Team members Jon Meredith, Sue Skinner, and Donna Pike attended the meeting of the Hill/Blaine/Choteau/Liberty Counties Regional Human Services Council in Fort Benton on February 28. They updated council members on FAIM Team activities. A considerable amount of discussion centered around the FAIM Coordinator's duties and also community service activities. It is anticipated that the Regional Human Services Council will play a big role in how welfare reform is implemented in our region. Information provided by FAIM Team at the meeting was greatly appreciated.

Fort Belknap Head Start, Indian Child Welfare Program, and BIA Social Services recently hosted a one-day workshop on welfare reform at the Fort Belknap Reservation. The purpose of this meeting was to begin a process of providing information to community members and administrative programs about welfare reform. Approximately 40 people attended. Sue Skinner of the FAIM Team addressed how welfare reform would impact the Reservation; Joanne Birdshead of BIA Area Social Services addressed the impact on federal funding especially as it relates to block grants; Nancy McDonagh of JOBS provided information on how JOBS is being implemented on the reservation and how it is linked to FAIM.

Fort Belknap is planning on hosting another session within the next three months. The tentative topic will be, *"Community Information on Welfare Reform and Self Sufficiency Skills Needed in the Work Place."*

Glacier County scheduled a meeting with the Blackfeet Tribe on May 10. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss welfare reform issues with the Blackfeet Tribe and to address their questions/concerns. Tribal Council, various Tribal Government, County Commissioners and local citizens were invited to attend. Eva Burney and Representative George Heavy Runner headed up the gathering.

Region III

by Lynn Rosenberg: The reality of FAIM is here. Now it's time for field workers to be informed and get involved. FAIM implementation should begin immediately, regardless of the date your county is scheduled for implementation. As eligibility workers, we need to understand the components of FAIM and what they mean to our jobs and our clients. By familiarizing ourselves with JSP, Pathways, and CSP now, we will be better prepared for the changes that affect ourselves and our clients.

If everyone moves forward together, then the success of the project will take care of itself!

Region IV

by Mary Kay McGinnis: Our management teams continue to work on welfare reform issues. Two major issues at present are, of course, training and policy. Another issue is community resources.

Silver Bow County has started its Community Advisory Council. The response from other agencies has been excellent. They are all willing to offer their services wherever possible. Granite, Meagher, Broadwater, and Jefferson Counties have initiated JOBS to prepare for implementation of welfare reform. Beaverhead County JOBS Task Force is looking at FAIM issues in Dillon and surrounding counties.

Many of our staff have signed up for training sessions made available through U of M. We have set up region-wide training in Butte after supervisor training. We are also looking at building a closer relationship with Child Support Enforcement Division.

Region V

by Sandy Love-Sprague: Our Regional Report deals with the importance of interactive interviewing, which I've been doing for three years now. I honestly don't think I could do an interview the old way!

I've found it's so much easier and faster to process a case by putting the information on TEAMS while the client is sitting in my office. The case processing is faster because I already have the information on the system, verified or not. If not verified, all I have to do is change the verification code, remove the pend date once the verifications are received, and authorize benefits. I don't have to try to remember what the client said or where it was written on the application possibly one to two weeks after I have done an interview; the information is put into case notes immediately.

I like being able to have the past information right there while doing the interview. The resource information is the most helpful to me. I've found that during many of my interviews, old information will be on the screens, but not on the application. By having the information available on TEAMS, I can immediately ask the client about the situation instead of having to contact him/her afterward. This saves me valuable time, and gets benefits to the client in a more timely manner. Also, I don't have to spend time copying SS cards if I see the "AG" verification.

I also enjoy using interactive interviewing during Redetermination/Recertification interviews as well as those with Medically Needy clients.

Clients have told me they prefer this method, too. In addition to knowing what their benefit amounts will be, they have an easier time comprehending the programs.

Q and A

by Kim Brown

In the course of our daily work, the FAIM Team receives numerous questions concerning welfare reform from across the state. As a regular part of the FAIM newsletter, we would like to share those questions and the answers to them with a large audience of readers interested in welfare reform.

(1) Will self-initiated child care exist in Pathways?

** Self-initiated child care will not exist in Pathways. However, if the client in a one-parent household is attending post-secondary education as an approved Family Investment Agreement activity, child care will be paid. If the client is attending outside of the FIA, he/she will be responsible for paying his/her own child care costs. (Child care will not be paid for post-secondary education in two-parent households).*

(2) Will Transition-to-Work exist, or will One-Time Employment-Related Payments be used instead?

** Transition-to-Work will end (except for those recipients in the control group) when the One-Time Employment-Related Payment begins.*

(3) Do we anticipate an increase in the number of child-only grants as parents send kids off to live with relatives so they can avoid having to comply with FIA requirements?

** We anticipate a small increase in child-only grants due to sanctions for noncompliance and possibly due to children being sent to live with relatives.*

However, because Family Investment Agreements will contain activities agreed upon through negotiation by the Participant and the FAIM Coordinator, we expect that most families will stay in compliance with program requirements. FAIM offers opportunities for clients to find alternatives to public assistance and become self-sufficient.

(4) Two-parent household in the Community Services Program: do both adults need to do community service?

** Both will have some participation requirements, though one parent's requirement may be to stay home and care for the children while the other performs community service outside of the home.*

This issue will be discussed further at the local level as communities develop their community operating plans and decide which activities will be allowed to fulfill community service obligations.

(5) If 10 Community Service slots are available in an area and there are 40 clients needing slots, is it true that the county human services office cannot place any of the clients in the slots because not enough are available to meet the entire need?

**No! The county would place 10 participants in the 10 slots. Which ten were selected could be based on such things as client choice, client skills, time waiting for a slot, child care need and availability...*

The prioritization criteria for slots will be determined as part of each local area's community operating plan.

If you have a question you would like to contribute to this column, please submit it to:
FAIM Team, SRS/FAD, Box 4210, Helena, MT 59604.

Everybody Has A Dream



by Virginia Satir

Some years ago I took on an assignment in a southern county to work with people on public welfare. What I wanted to do was show that everybody has the capacity to be self-sufficient and all we have to do is to activate them. I asked the county to pick a group of people who were on public welfare, people from different racial groups and different family constellations. I would then see them as a group for three hours every Friday. I also asked for a little petty cash to work with as I needed it.

The first thing I said after I shook hands with everybody was, "I would like to know what your dreams are." Everyone looked at me as if I were kind of wacky.

"Dreams? We don't have dreams."

I said, "Well, when you were a kid what happened? Wasn't there something you wanted to do?"

One woman said to me, "I don't know what you can do with dreams. The rats are eating up my kids."

"Oh," I said. "That's terrible. No, of course, you are very much involved with the rats and your kids. How can that be helped?"

"Well, I could use a new screendoor because there are holes in my screendoor."

I asked, "Is there anybody around here who knows how to fix a screendoor?"

There was a man in the group, and he said, "A long time ago I used to do things like that but now I have a terribly bad back, but I'll try."

I told him I had some money if he would go to the store and buy some screening and go and fix the lady's screendoor. "Do you think you can do that?"

"Yes, I'll try."

The next week, when the group was seated, I said to the woman, "Well, is your screen door fixed?"

"Oh, yes," she said.

"Then we can start dreaming, can't we?" She sort of smiled at me.

I said to the man who did the work, "How do you feel?"

He said, "Well, you know, it's a very funny thing. I'm beginning to feel a lot better."

That helped the group to begin to dream. These seemingly small successes allowed the group to see that dreams were not insane. These small steps began to get people to see and feel that something really could happen.

I began to ask other people about their dreams. One woman shared that she always wanted to be a secretary. I said, "Well, what stands in your way?" (That's always my next question.)

She said, "I have six kids, and I don't have anyone to take care of them while I'm away."

"Let's find out," I said. "Is there anybody in this group who would take care of six kids for a day or two a week while this woman gets some training here at the community college?"

One woman said "I got kids, too, but I could do that."

"Let's do it," I said. So a plan was created and the woman went to school.

Everyone found something. The man who put in the screendoor became a handyman. The woman who took in the children became a licensed foster care person. In 12 weeks I had all these people off public welfare. I've not only done that once, I've done it many times.

(Reprinted with permission. Taken from the book, "Chicken Soup For The Soul." Written and compiled by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen. Published by Health Communications, Inc., 1993.)

MEWA Conference to Highlight FAIM

by Kim Brown

The Montana Eligibility Workers Association (MEWA) will be hosting its annual conference in Great Falls October 3-5, 1995. The Conference Planning Committee has been most generous in agreeing to allow welfare reform ample time on the agenda.

Two nationally-known guest speakers, Dr. Mary Tyler and Larry Townsend, will be coming to share their experiences and expertise with Montana staff. Dr. Tyler provides inspirational and motivational training, while Mr. Townsend (Director of the renowned GAIN Program in Riverside, California) brings intimate knowledge of what makes a welfare reform program successful.

During the Wednesday noon luncheon, Carbon County's own Mary Newman will offer advice on keeping a sense of humor in the face of change. Arrangements are still being made for a closing speaker who can send everyone off full of excitement and enthusiasm.

FAIM Team has also been working with the committee to develop meaningful, educational breakout sessions for Wednesday, October 4th. Planned topics include: "Welfare-to-Work" (based on a professional workshop two team members will be attending this summer); "Mini New Directions" (a "quickie" version of the major FAIM training offered to counties one month prior to their implementation dates); possibly several sessions with Dr. Tyler and Mr. Townsend; and finally, a community resources panel to provide information about and ideas for enhancing coordination within communities.

The Planning Committee is busy finalizing the agenda for October 3rd and 5th, as well as the non-welfare reform-related breakout sessions scheduled for October 4th. They are committed to hosting a well-balanced conference to meet the needs and interests of all.

The 1995 MEWA Conference promises to be a fascinating, fun-filled, information- and action-packed three days with something for everyone lucky enough to attend!



by Sherri Brandewie

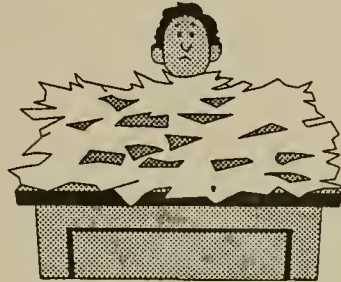
An informational meeting will be held to provide an overview of the final FAIM project design and its potential impact on Montana's Native American population. This meeting is the first step in the process to negotiate cooperative agreements with any tribe wishing to participate in the FAIM project.

The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 23rd, and will be held in the Sapphire Room at the Park Inn (formerly Yogo Inn), located at 211 East Main Street, Lewistown, MT. It will start at 10:00 AM and adjourn at 3:00 PM.

Due to the rapidly approaching implementation schedule, it is vital for each tribe to be represented and that tribal issues be discussed. This will enable us, if requested by any tribe, to proceed with negotiating cooperative agreements in a timely manner.

FAIM Team is interested in hearing your comments/questions/opinions regarding FAIM. Diverse opinions are welcome. Maybe your office has received a letter you would like to share with our newsletter audience? Maybe you have someone who calls you to express opinions on welfare reform who would be willing to write a letter? Maybe you have something you would like to share? If so, please e-mail, fax, or mail the items to:

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